

Sample Format for Submitting Testimony on 5322

Raised Bill No. 5322: AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A HUMAN SERVICES PERMIT AND A REQUIREMENT THAT SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS CONDUCT HOME VISITS DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR

Education Committee

Submitted By: Themis Enright, LCSW

I am writing in my capacity as a school social worker for 25 + years to express my opposition against Raised Bill No. 5322 for the below reasons:

This proposed bill is not clinically sound. Any professional doing a home visit should decide upon that on a case by case basis and should not be legally demanded of school personnel at the level suggested. It is insulting to families and the potential for disruption in the therapeutic relationship far exceeds whatever benefit intended by the creators of this bill. Additionally, this bill proposed bill seems to have the intent to potentially absolve the CT State Department of Children and Families from their duties and responsibilities in responding to and assessing referrals of educational neglect. School social workers are exactly that— school social workers— and by requiring school social workers to enter the home changes the relationship and the dynamics. Also, with case load numbers/insufficient numbers of School Social Workers and unsustainable case loads per social worker as currently exists in many large schools in CT, it will be mathematically impossible to do two home visits per student seen within the contracted hours of school social worker while providing IEP counseling hours within the school setting—in addition to sustaining all responsibilities associated in the role of school social worker. To require home visits may open the door to providing counseling at home which cannot nor should be done within the home setting nor during school day hours- and suggests this occur outside contracted hours school day hours. School social workers need to work on and address the Social/emotional/behavioral issues that occur and are unique to the school setting. Most importantly, there is the issue of safety- no school staff should be required to do a home visit without an additional staff to accompany them. It is the school protocol where I work that an administrator accompany any staff doing a home visit, when such a visit is so deemed appropriate by clinical staff and warranted and based on the individual student needs . Is the State of Connecticut prepared to now mandate administrators to accompany school social workers and to provide two home visits per student on case load? Is the State of Connecticut prepared to made school resource officers to accompany social workers? Are there proposed mandates to Department of Children and Families hotline workers or DCF investigators??

Is there anyone that currently sits on the Education Committee that has a background in school social work?? Or closely related??

In conclusion, I believe that I speak on behalf of school social workers across the State of Connecticut and the United States, and I believe I speak on behalf of school administrators, when I state my opposition to Proposed Bill 5322 for the above outlined reasons.

Respectfully Submitted,

Themi Enright, LCSW